



# CAREGIVER CONNECTIONS

*A monthly newsletter brought to you by the Calvert County Office on Aging.*

*January 2021*



Dear Friends,

A new year is upon us and I know all of us are happy to see 2020 in our rear-view window. The new year brings with it the possibility of a fresh start and new opportunities. Some of you may have recently taken on new responsibilities of providing care while others have many years of experience. Each month this newsletter will focus on one topic; if there are specific topics you would like to see, please let me know. My hope is that this newsletter helps you with your journey as a caregiver and reminds each and every one of you how important you are and how much you are valued in our community.

## **7 Positive New Year's Resolutions for Caregivers**

- 1. Learn to love yourself again:** When we embark on the journey of family caregiving, it's easy to lose ourselves. Between endless to-do lists and increasing needs, caring for an older adult may swell to consume our time and eventually our identity, too. And when even tiny, unimportant mistakes feel like we're failing someone we love, we may find ourselves in dark places with no clear path out. But part of being a good family caregiver is taking care of yourself too. Finding ways to manage the doubt and insecurity that can sink in over time is one of the most important things we can do for ourselves.
- 2. Don't stress about things you can't control:** One way to manage that doubt is to understand that there are many things that are simply out of our control.

3. Become mindful of your situation: Ultimately, as family caregivers, we do what we do out of love for someone in our lives. Our sense of responsibility and duty may cloud that, but that love is the bond that keeps family caregivers going.

4. Look for silver linings: There are upsides to even the most difficult situations, but sometimes they're difficult to see. The forest is there, though – you just have to look for it.

5. Make time to decompress: Every caregiver needs to be able to step away once in a while. You deserve to find respite from your responsibilities, whether it's finally taking that vacation you've been planning or going for a short walk in the evenings. Self-care is care too. And finding ways to process or escape your feelings is a valid and important part of the caregiving process. Start small: plan to take an hour for yourself once a week.

6. Embrace the time you have: Caregiving may seem endless, but for most of us, it won't last forever.

7. Find help when you need it: Finally, caregiving is a huge job. It's often more than one person can handle alone. When you find yourself stretched thin or unable to meet all the obligations you've set, reach out to family and friends for assistance. Remember to be specific and direct so your calls for help don't fall through the cracks. Remind yourself that caregiving is about caring for someone and helping them live the best life they can, despite the circumstances. Seeking help to provide the needed level of care isn't a failure. It's part of doing the best job you can.

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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